

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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EUR-12 EB-07 OES-03 /088 W
----- 038968

R 130815Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3138

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 1471

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TC

SUBJECT: COMPETITION AMONG UAE RULERS CONTINUES TO BE VIGOROUS

1. I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM TOUR OF THE NORTHERN EMIRATES WHERE I
HAD LONG CHATS
WITH SHAIKH RASHID, SULTAN, AND SAQR.

2. TAKEN AS A WHOLE, I FOUND THEIR MOOD TO BE RATHER FEISTY. THE
VOLUME AND VARIETY OF THE GRIPEs ABOUT THE WAY SHAIKH ZAYID IS
RUNNING THINGS SEEMED TO HAVE GONE UP A NOTCH. RASHID WAS SCORNFUL
OF THE PUBLICITY EMANATING FROM ZAYID'S TRIP TO FRANCE INDICATING THAT

THE UAE WOULD "HELP FRANCE IN ITS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES" AND
HERALDING "COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY". AS USUAL HE
ATTRIBUTED MOST OF THE SINS OF ABU DHABI TO THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN
ADVISORS. SULTAN SPOKE OF HIS DIFFICULTIES TRYING TO RAISE MONEY IN
ABU DHABI FOR A PROJECT, FOR WHICH WE WOULD HAVE TO PAY 8 PERCENT,
AND WITH A NOTE OF BITTERNESS COMPARED THIS WITH ZAYID'S WILLING-
NESS TO LEND PAKISTAN \$100 MILLION AT 2 PERCENT OVER 40 YEARS. SAQR
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WAS FURIOUS OVER A RECENT EPISODE WHEN FEDERAL TROOPS HAD BEEN

ORDERED TO BOARD A NEW OFF-SHORE OIL PLATFORM BEING BUILT UNDER RAS-AL-KHAIMAH CONCESSION (UPON UM AL-QAIWAIN'S CLAIM THAT IT WAS SETTING UP IN UM AL-QAIWAIN WATERS) WITHOUT FIRST COMING TO HIM WITH THE COMPLAINT. SAQR ORDERED A CONTINGENT OF THE RAS AL-KHAIMAH MOBILE FORCE TO THE RIG AND IF THE FEDERAL TROOPS HAD NOT PROMPTLY DECAMPED (WHICH THEY DID) "WE WOULD HAVE KILLED THEM."

3. THE ZAYID-SUWAIDI CAMPAIGN TO UNIFY MILITARY AND SECURITY ESTABLISHMENTS WAS IN FOREFRONT OF EVERYONE'S MINDS. OF THE THREE RULERS, SULTAN OF SHARJAH IS MOST RELAXED ABOUT PROSPECT OF UNIFICATION, BUT EVEN HE WAS CRITICAL OF ZAYID'S CONTINUALLY TRYING TO USE HIM AND OTHER RULERS IN WHAT SULTAN DESCRIBES AS "ARGUMENT BETWEEN ZAYID AND RASHID." RASHID AND SAQR, FOR THEIR OWN SEPARATE REASONS, SEEM TO BE ON SAME WAVELENGTH ON UNIFICATION WEAPONRY OF ADDF, AND BOTH STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT GREATER EQUALITY BETWEEN ADDF AND OTHER EMIRATE FORCES WOULD HAVE TO BE PREREQUISITE FOR ANY UNIFICATION. FROM THEIR CHIPPER MOOD, IT APPEARS RASHID AND SAQR FEEL

THEY HAVE FOUND IN THIS LINE OF ARGUMENTATION A SATISFACTORY RATIONALE FOR FENDING OFF PRESSURE FOR UNIFICATION. IF SAQR NEEDED AN ADDITIONAL REASONS TO STIFFEN HIS RESISTANCE TO UNIFICATION (WHICH WE DOUBT), EPISODE WITH UM AL-QAIWAIN WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE PROVIDED IT.

4. SAQR ALSO MENTIONED THAT IN HIS VIEW MILITARY UNIFICATION SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT SOME FORM OF "GUARANTEE" FROM SAUDI ARABIA. WHILE HE PHRASED THIS SOMEWHAT VAGUELY IN TERMS OF GUARANTEE OF UAE AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGRESSION, WHAT IS PROBABLY ON HIS MIND IS SAUDI GUARANTEE THAT ANY UNIFIED FORCE WOULD NOT BE USED AGAINST RAS AL-KHAIMAH. ANOTHER SOURCE IS RAS AL-KHAIMAH CLAIMED THAT SHAIKH SAQR HAS BEEN IN NO WAY DISCOURAGED FROM PURSUING HIS BILATERAL CONNECTION WITH SAUDI ARABIA. SAQR RECENTLY MADE TRIP TO RIYADH WHERE HE RECEIVED, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SAUDI ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED DIRECT SUPPORT, INCLUDING FUNDING OF HIS MOBILE FORCE. IF ACCURATE, REPORT IS INTERESTING BECAUSE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HERE HAS REPEATEDLY ASKED SAG TO CEASE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH SAQR.

5. ANOTHER SIGN OF RESTIVENESS ON PART OF RULERS WAS ELABORATE PERFORMANCE SHAIKH RASHID LAID ON THREE DAYS AGO TO MARK SIGNING OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NEW ACCORD WITH DUBAI PETROLEUM COMPANY. ALTHOUGH HE WAS SIGNING PURELY IN HIS CAPACITY AS RULER OF DUBAI, HE SUMMONED DIPLOMATIC CORPS FROM ABU DHABI, OTHER RULERS, AND ENTIRE BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF DUBAI TO WITNESS CEREMONY AND ATTEND LUNCH. RASHID'S PUBLIC STATEMENT READ AT THE CEREMONY SPOKE RESOUNDINGLY OF TAKING OVER OIL COMPANY, BUT WE KNOW THAT AGREEMENT IN FACT PROVIDES FOR NO PARTICIPATION BY RASHID AND FOR SIGNIFICANT DEDUCTION FROM ABU DHABI FORMULA GOVERNMENT TAKE TO ENABLE OWNING COMPANIES TO PUT UP 100

PERCENT OF CAPITAL FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. RASHID KEP AGREEMENT
SECRET UNTIL AFTER SHAIKH ZAYID HAD LEFT COUNTRY FOR FRANCE.
AS ONE WATCHED RASHID SIGNING AGREEMENT WITH FLASHBULBS POPPING AND
TV CAMERAS WHIRLING, ONE COULD NOT HELP FEELING PERFOR-
MANCE HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONCOCTED TO STRIKE CONTRAST BETWEEN RASHID,
STILL HERE WORKING HARD IN SUMMER, WHILE ZAYID HAS GONE OFF ON YET
ANOTHER VACATION, AND BETWEEN PROTRACTED ABU DHABI OIL NEGOTIATIONS
LAST WINTER WHICH PRODUCED DROP IN GOVERNMENT REVENUE, AND BUSINESS-
LIKE SETTLEMENT BY RASHID MISLEADINGLY PORTRAYED TO PUBLIC AS ENTIRELY

IN HIS FAVOR.

6. OTHER RULERS SEEM TO SENSE THAT THERE IS GROUNDSWELL OF CRITICISM
AGAINST ZAYID'S SLACK ADMINISTRATION IN ABU DHABI AND THEY ARE
PROBABLY HAPPY ENOUGH TO GIVE IT FURTHER PUSH. MISTRUSTFUL AMONG
THEMSELVES, WE WOULD GUESS THAT THEIR MOTIVES THUS FAR ARE DEFENSIVE-
TO SOLIDIFY THEIR POSITION AGAINST FURTHER ENCROACHMENTS OF ABU DHABI
INFLUENCE AND SPECIFICALLY TO CARRY SOME PUBLIC OPINION WITH THEM
IN COMING BATTLE OVER MILITARY AND SECURITY UNIFICATION. FEW DAYS
BEFORE SIGNING CEREMONY SHAIKH RASHID MADE COMMENT TO ME, "A YEAR
AGO EVERYBODY WAS CRITICIZING ME AND PRAISING ZAYID. NOW THEY'RE ALL
CRITICIZING ZAYID." RIVALRY AMONG RULERS THUS CONTINUES TO BE
VIGOROUS, BUT PRINCIPAL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED--ZAYID, RASHID, AND
SAQR--ARE ALL CANNY IN THEIR SEPARATE WAYS AND NONE OF THEM, WE BE-
LIEVE, WOULD WISH TO CARRY IN-FIGHTING TO POINT OF THREATENING
BASIC VIABILITY OF FEDERATION. RATHER RASHID'S AND SAQR'S OBJECTIVES
APPEAR TO BE TO HOLD FEDERATION IN APPROXIMATELY ITS PRESENT STATE,
GAMBLING THAT BETTER ADMINISTRATION AND USE OF RESOURCES IN THEIR
TERRITORIES (AND DISCOVERY OF OIL IN RAS AL-KHAIMAH) WILL OVER TIME
INCREASE THEIR BARGAINING POSITION VIS-A-VIS ABU DHABI. IN MEANTIME
THEY ARE DETERMINED NOT TO TAKE ANY PROPOSED ENCROACHMENTS OF
ABU DHABI POWER LYING DOWN.

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